



March 13, 2024

Representative Jesse Sumner
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: House Bill 378--*CLEAR Calls for Stricter Regulation of Organized Retail Crime to Protect Alaska Communities*

Dear Representative Sumner, Chair House Labor and Commerce Committee:

The Coalition of Law Enforcement and Retail (CLEAR) is urging lawmakers to address organized retail crime in Alaska by supporting HB 378. Organized retail crime is continuing to harm consumers, retail employees, and loss prevention officers, posing a dangerous threat to our communities at large. These sophisticated criminal networks steal goods in massive quantities and resell that merchandise to criminal networks and leading online marketplaces. The protection and security of our communities is vital, and we are deeply disturbed by those who have been put in harm's way due to the activities of nefarious retail crime rings. Such rings have been closely linked to major criminal organizations involved in other serious crimes.

According to a recent study by the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) organized retail crime costs Alaska retailers nearly \$50 Million dollars in annual losses, which acutely reflects the many ways in which it takes away from hard-working businesses and risks the harm of individuals. We encourage active collaboration between law enforcement agencies, businesses, and other private sector organizations to support HB 378 to ensure the safety of all Alaskans.

Our coalition has supported similar federal and state legislation that is proving to be a valuable tool and the foundation for sustainable positive results against large scale retail theft. While a number of states such as Florida and Illinois have initiated their own task forces to combat organized retail crime, the issue remains deeply rooted in state policy reform. We believe that lawmakers in Alaska have a valuable resource at their disposal to address the pervasiveness of retail crime with HB 378, and we urge them to collaborate with law enforcement and businesses to put an end to the perilous dangers of organized retail crime in that great state.

Sincerely,

Ben Dugan

Ben Dugan
National Coalition of Law Enforcement and Retail